

CASTLEPOLLARD COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Code of Behaviour 2026-27

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Mission Statement:

In Castlepollard Community College our Mission is to provide a school environment which facilitates excellent teaching and learning. We strive to continuously improve our school. Our values include a high expectation of personal achievement and success; commitment to good order and discipline; mutual respect for our students and staff and a high level of safety and support for our students.

We endeavour to have our parents, teachers, and community members actively involved in our students' learning.

Our ethos is distinct and as a result, our core values of Care, Community, Respect, Equality and Excellence in education permeate through everything we do.

The Code of Behaviour reflects the Values in the School Mission Statement:

Introduction

This Code of Behaviour has been prepared in accordance with Guidelines issued by the National Educational Welfare Board. Inputs have been received from the Board of Management, Teaching and other Staff members, Home School Community Liaison Officer, Parents/guardians and Students. It is hoped that this inclusive approach will help to maximise the benefits of this code to the school community.

The Health, Safety and Welfare of each member of the school community underpins the Code of Behaviour.

The Code of Behaviour will be reviewed regularly. Ongoing reviews and evaluation take cognisance of changing information, changing society, legislation, ministerial/government instructions, developments in the school-based programmes and feedback from students, staff, parents/guardians, and the Board of Management/ETB.

Rationale

Under S23 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, the Board of Management must prepare and make available a Code of Behaviour for its students. The Act requires that the school Code of Behaviour is prepared in accordance with the Guidelines issued by the National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB)

Equality Statement

Castlepollard Community College is committed to ensuring Legal compliance with the Equal Status Acts 2000 to 2004 and the Equal Status Acts 2000 to 2008. Our equality policy reflects the school's commitment to meet its obligation under the Equal Status Acts 2000 to 2008 which prohibit discrimination in schools across the nine equality grounds ie:

- Gender
- Marital Status
- Family Status
- Religion
- Age
- Disability
- Sexual Orientation
- Race
- Membership of the Travelling Community

Scope

This Code of Behaviour is applicable:

- to class periods and break periods during the school day
- when students are on the school premises before school starts
- when students are out of school on school related activities
- when students are taking part in extra-curricular activities
- when students are wearing their school uniform in the vicinity of the school

Aims

- to provide an environment within which students feel safe, secure and respected
- to provide an environment where staff and students work together in an atmosphere of co-operation and mutual respect
- to create a climate that encourages and reinforces positive behaviour
- to encourage self-discipline and responsibility among students
- to help students mature into responsible participating citizens
- to facilitate good order and a positive teaching and learning environment

Objectives

- to encourage and recognise positive behaviour
- to apply the code consistently and fairly
- to ensure that the school's high expectations for the behaviour of all the members of the school community are widely known and encouraged
- to create a climate that encourages and reinforces good behaviour

School Rules

Students are expected to:

- arrive at school on time in preparation for first class or well-being assembly class at 8.48a.m. (8.50am on Fridays)
- abstain from eating and drinking in class; chewing gum is forbidden
- co-operate and respect teachers and all staff
- respect other students and their property
- show respect for school property and keep the school litter free • wear full uniform at all times
- remain on the school premises for the duration of the school day
- have their School Journal with them in all classes
- have all necessary books and equipment with them for each class
- complete all assigned homework
- Students are advised to leave mobile phones at home. In the event that a parent wants their child to take their phone to school they should not be visible. If a child wants to contact home they may speak to member of staff or go to reception for permission to do so.
- The school phone will be available at all times for students should they need to use it • Headphones are to be taken out and not visible during the school day or on the premises
- comply with all systems (including VSware) and procedures in the school.

Students are forbidden from:

- smoking on school grounds or in the vicinity of the school
- consuming or having in their possession any illegal substance or product (e.g fireworks) on school grounds or in the vicinity of the school
- consuming or having in their possession any substance or product which may be perceived as a substitute for an illegal substance or product
- undertaking any activity which endangers the life of themselves or any of their fellow students, teachers or staff
- using the camera facility on their phone except when authorised by a teacher to do so
- texting parents to request that they leave school due to illness – students must report to the Deputy Principal or HSCL Officer or Principal in the event of feeling unwell and contact with a parent/guardian may be made by school management.

Sanctions

The purpose of these sanctions is to help students understand the consequences of their behaviour and to take responsibility for changing that behaviour. The level of misbehaviour dictates the sanction that applies. The absence of misbehaviour from the lists below does not mean that a sanction will not apply.

Low Level Misbehaviour

- a. Minor breaches of school rules (-25 VSware points => student on report)
- b. Chewing Gum/littering
- c. Wearing incorrect uniform

- d. Failing to attempt homework
- e. Disrupting Class by talking/laughing etc
- f. Failing to bring required books/equipment to class
- g. Being late for class
- h. Eating and/or drinking in class
- i. Punctuality

Sanctions

- i. Separation within the classroom ii. Additional homework
- iii. Verbal Reprimand
- iv. Record on VSware
- v. Canteen cleaning duty/collecting litter/removing chewing gum
- vi. Detention

Medium Level Misbehaviour

- a. Use of abusive language
- b. Persistent Classroom Disruption
- c. Refusal to carry out teacher's instruction
- d. Temper Tantrum
- e. A fight between students
- f. Continuous Low Level Misbehaviour (-50 VSware points)
- g. Disrespectful behaviour towards other students or their property
- h. Shouting/horseplay in corridors
- i. Punctuality
- j. Breach of AUP
- k. NOTE: If deemed appropriate, a serious sanction may apply

Sanctions

- i. Supervised detention by the teacher
- ii. Removal from class and placed elsewhere under supervision iii. Report to Assistant Principal or Deputy Principal
- iv. Detention
- v. School Community Work
- vi. Report Card
- vii. Internal Suspension

Serious Misbehaviour

- a. Continuous Medium Level Misbehaviour or extreme medium Level Misbehaviour (-100 VSware points)
- b. Bullying or harassment of other students.
- c. Verbal or Physical Assault, threat or abuse of a member of staff
- d. Verbal or Physical Assault, threat or abuse of a fellow student
- e. Damage to property of staff or students
- f. Putting your own, or a teacher's or fellow student's health or safety at risk
- g. Possession of mobile phones, fireworks, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes/tobacco/vapes or substitute products or ear pods/headphones

- h. Consumption of drugs, alcohol or substitute products
- i. Sale, or distribution of fireworks, alcohol, drugs or substitute products
- j. Possession of knife or offensive weapon.
- k. Malicious damage to property.
- l. Theft within the school.
- m. Use of social networking sites or other media to discredit another student or staff member
- n. Serious misbehaviour on school-related activities
- o. Mithing; absent/leaving class without permission or leaving school without permission
- p. Open Defiance of Authority
- q. Any behaviour that brings the school's name into disrepute
- r. Withholding information or perverting an investigation
- s. Sharing of explicit images of other students without permission

(Note: Assault is an imminent threat of danger)

Sanctions

- i. Suspension ii. Possible Expulsion iii. Any combination of the sanctions for Medium Level Misbehaviour

Recording Misbehaviour

- Students should be informed when a record is being made on VSware about their behaviour, and the reasons for keeping a record
- Records will be kept in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1988 and the Data Protection (Amendment) Act 2003

Discipline Structures: Roles and Responsibilities

“All staff should consider themselves responsible at all times for the behaviour of children within sight or sound of them and should respond promptly and firmly to any instance of unacceptable behaviour”. (Circular, M33/91)

Subject teacher	• Deals with instances of minor misbehaviour. • Records instances of misbehaviour on VSWare when necessary and passes on to the Year Head. • Keeps parents/guardian informed through use of the journal/VSWare/phone calls.
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Tutor	• Monitors morning punctuality and refers concerns to the Year Head. • Monitors compliance with school uniform and assigns appropriate sanctions regarding breaches of uniform. • Monitors student's journals and follows up where necessary. • Builds supportive relationships with students and parents/guardians regarding academic progress. • Talks to student about difficulties helping to effect a change in behaviour. • Keeps parents informed of positive behavioural referrals.
Head of Year	• Builds supportive relationships with students and parents/guardians. • Deals with misbehaviour referred in written format on VSWare. • Imposes sanctions in response to behavioural referrals. • Contacts parents and arranges formal appointments. • Consults with Deputy Principal and Principal when suspension is being considered. • Consults parents regarding suspension. • Sends formal notification of suspension. • Files copy of notification of suspension.
	• Ensures study work is assigned for period of suspension • Completes suspension entry on VSWare. • Assists in student's reintegration on return from suspension. • Contacts parents/guardians regarding Lates. • Keeps parents informed of all negative behavioural referrals.
Deputy Principal	• Advises Year Head when dealing with incidents of serious misbehaviour or repeated incidents of misbehaviour which affect the learning and teaching of others. DP enters disciplinary records on VSware and ensures that student statements are filed with support from school secretary.

Principal	• Ensures all staff members administer the Code of Positive Behaviour consistently and fairly to all students. • Has sole authority to impose suspensions.
Guidance Counsellor	• Pastoral role. • Provides time and space to help students showing particularly challenging behaviour, recognise and respond to their feelings and deal with the issues. • Make referrals to outside agencies.
Home School Community Liaison	• Pastoral role. • Maintains strong links with the parents. • Maintain strong links with the community agencies, developing a positive learning environment.

Use of Sanctions/Consequences/Repercussions:

The purpose of using appropriate sanctions is to provide space to initially promote students to reflect on, take responsibility for and encouragement to change their behaviour. The Code of Positive Behaviour is connected in its operation to other policies that are currently in operation in the school or under development in the current academic year. These include but are not limited to:

- ☐ The Child Protection Policy
- ☐ The Anti-Bullying Policy
- ☐ The Substance Abuse Policy
- ☐ ICT Usage Policy to encompass mobile device usage policy
- ☐ The Social, Personal and Health Education Programme
- ☐ The Health and Safety Statement
- ☐ The Homework Policy

Board of Management

This Code of Behaviour is given formal approval by the Board of Management. The Board of Management will support the Principal and teaching staff in its just implementation. Only the Board of Management can expel students. It hears appeals from parents/guardians in instances of suspension which exceed 20 days. It decides on the recommendation of the Principal to expel a student following a full hearing of all parties concerned.

Procedures for Detention

Detention may take place at lunchtime or after school. School Community work takes place after school for a period of 45 mins. If a student is to be detained for a period in excess of 15 minutes, parents/guardians will be notified by a:

Note on VShare & a text message sent at least 24 hours in advance.

Positive Behaviour

All Staff will make every effort to encourage and celebrate good behaviour, positive achievements and positive efforts of the students and will have high expectations for good behaviour.

Positive behaviour strategies will include:

- positive feedback in term reports
- privileges for senior students
- student of the Month awards
- verbal recognitions/praise and positive reinforcement
- positive comment on VShare
- end of term reward
- letter to parents/guardians
- homework pass
- assignment of positions of responsibility: class duty, prefect, mentor,
- announcement on intercom or assembly
- publication in newsletter
- awards Ceremony
- class Rewards such as outings
- any other appropriate strategy (see below)

Promoting Positive Behaviour:

The 3 R's – Respect; Ready; Responsible support Castlepollard Community College in its principal aim of promoting positive behaviour. School management and staff actively foster a school ethos, policies and practices that help to promote positive behaviour and prevent inappropriate behaviour. Students who follow the 3 R's – Respect; Ready and Responsible make an immense and positive impact to the school community through their behaviour.

Location	Be Respectful	Be Responsible	Be Ready
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In the classroom	☐ Enter classroom quietly ☐ Journal on desk ☐ Listen to your teacher and each other ☐ One voice at a time ☐ Hand up and wait	☐ Ask for help when needed ☐ Stay focused on the task ☐ Try your best ☐ Allow others to learn and the teacher to teach	☐ Be on time ☐ Settle down quickly ☐ Have all your books and equipment on your desk ☐ Follow instructions ☐ Put phone away
Outside the classroom	☐ Keep to the left on corridors ☐ Treat others as you would like to be treated ☐ Use appropriate language & voice level	☐ Go directly to your next class ☐ Follow teacher's instructions ☐ Watch your space and keep hands and feet to yourself ☐ Put litter in bin	☐ Eat, Drink, go to toilet and lockers at correct times ☐ Use your timetable to ensure you have what you need ☐ Line up outside classroom
In the general school community	☐ Attend every day ☐ Be kind and mannerly to every person in the school ☐ Respect property and equipment of your school ☐ Be proud of your school	☐ Be where you are supposed to be ☐ Be a positive representative of the school ☐ Keep MCC substance free ☐ Bullying is everybody's business Look up, Speak out and Tell someone if you notice something is wrong	☐ Make the most of your time in school ☐ Help and look out for each other ☐ Always be ready for learning by In full uniform ☐ Use mobile phone at authorised times only

Points:

VShare Points System

25	Positive praise	Negative On Report 3 days
50	DP announces on intercom Contact Parents	75 HW pass Internal Suspension
100	Voucher	Suspension
125, 150, 175, 200 as above		

The above table is used as a guide for the purposes of monitoring behaviour. The Principal may need to make a decision based on best practice for the good of all other students, staff and the school. The advice of the Chairperson of the Board of Management will be sought in this scenario and will be communicated to parents/guardians.

Students with Special Educational Needs

Class Tutors and Special Needs Assistants will ensure that the Code of Behaviour is communicated in a way that students with special needs will understand. If a student with special needs is acting in a way that would usually be perceived as breaching the rules, every effort will be made to ensure that this student understands the rules and he/she may be given additional opportunities to practice the rules before a sanction is imposed. If a sanction is imposed, the student with special needs should understand the purpose of the sanction and the reason why their behaviour is unacceptable.

Role of Parents/Guardians

Parents/guardians act as the major role models for their child. They can contribute to the School's Code by:

- Ensuring full attendance at school
- Ensuring student arrives at school on time
- Ensuring student wears full uniform
- Encouraging positive co-operation
- Supporting the School's Code
- Bringing concerns to the attention of the school
- Developing a sense of self-worth in their child
- Recognising their child's effort and achievements
- Learning to listen and listening to learn
- Support the Parents' Association

Absences/Lates

Where possible, the school should be notified in advance of absences. Reasons for absences should be recorded by parents/guardians in the relevant section in the student's journal. Students are discouraged from leaving school for appointments etc. during the day. Where it is absolutely necessary to leave before the end of the school day, students must have written permission and must be collected by their parent/guardian or a nominee of their parent/guardian. Details of a student's departure should be recorded on VShare, which must be sanctioned by (Deputy) / Assistant Principal or Secretary. 'Lates' will be recorded by the

Deputy/Principal/Secretary in the the student journal and onto VSware. Students who are continuously late will be liable for the sanctions outlined in this Code of Behaviour

Uniform

The full uniform should be worn at all times.

Boys

Navy jumper with school crest

Grey shirt with top button

Navy trousers

Black or navy socks

Black Shoes/black runners without logos

Girls

Navy jumper with school crest

Grey shirt

Navy trousers/Skirt

Black or navy socks

Black Shoes/black runners*

If it is absolutely necessary to wear a tee-shirt under a shirt, the only colour permitted is white. Football jerseys of any colour are not allowed to be worn under shirts. Students who do not wear the correct uniform may be refused entry to class. Jackets may not be worn in class. PE Uniform – all students

Blue/Navy Tracksuit bottoms (O’Neills PE Gear)

The school reserves the right to ask students to remove excessive jewelry. One pair of small earrings is acceptable. Any other facial jewelry is not permitted. Any other visible facial jewelry body art or hoodies is not permitted.

*Students shall wear footwear provided by the school without prejudice.

The Right to Search

In the interests of the general student body, the school reserves the right to search a student’s property ie: a locker, schoolbag or to give an instruction to a student to empty his/her school bag or pocket or remove a jacket. This may arise in the context of substance abuse, theft or possession of any item that may endanger the health and safety of others. The search will be authorised by the Deputy Principal or the Principal. The search will be conducted in the presence of at least two staff members.

Parental Concerns or Complaints

Parents/Guardians are welcome to contact the school in the event of any concerns or complaints relating to the behaviour of their child. The School will arrange a meeting of the relevant personnel at the earliest opportunity. The School expects that all such meetings will be held in an atmosphere of constructive interaction between all parties.

Students aged eighteen years or more

If an adult student requests the school to restrict or limit communication with parents/guardians or to limit parental involvement in matters relating to their education, the school will inform the parents/guardians of the student about the change in practice and the reasons. If adult students or PLC students are deemed to be exempt from any part of this Code of Behaviour, the exemptions will be communicated in writing to the Student.

Suspension and Expulsion

In instances of suspension which exceed 20 days or in cases of expulsion, the parents/guardians (or the student if aged 18 or over) have the right of appeal to the Board of Management.

Suspension

Authority to suspend has been delegated to the Principal and Deputy Principal by the Board of Management. In the interests of due process and fair procedures, the matter will be investigated by the Disciplinary Committee which shall consist of the Deputy Principal and two Assistant Principals.

Procedures in the case of a Suspension

The Parents/guardians and student will be informed of;

- the allegations being made
- the investigation procedures
- the student's right to respond to the allegations
- the student's right to be heard and respond to the sanction if it is of a serious nature

Implementing the Suspension

The Principal/Deputy Principal will notify the parents/guardians and the student in writing of the decision to suspend. The letter will confirm:

- the period of suspension and the dates on which the suspension will begin and end •
the reasons for the suspension
- the arrangements for returning to school
- the provision for an appeal to the Board of Management where the suspension exceeds 20 days

Expulsion

The Board of Management has the authority to expel a student.

The School will take significant steps to address unacceptable behaviour which may result in expulsion. These steps include:

- meeting with parents/guardians and the student to find ways of helping the student to change their behaviour
- making sure that the student understands the possible consequences of their behaviour, if it should persist
- ensuring that all other possible options have been tried
- seeking the assistance of external support agencies

General Principles of Suspension & Expulsion

There will be cases of unacceptable behaviour where it will be in the best interests of the school community and/or the pupil involved, for the pupil to be removed from the school for a period of time or completely. Suspension and expulsion are the options available to the Principal and/or the Board of Management in these situations. The Board of Management and the Principal will exercise this authority having regard to their responsibilities to the whole school community and to fair procedures based on the Principles of Natural Justice.

The right to be heard:

The right to know that the alleged misbehaviour is being investigated

The right to know the details of the allegations being made and any other information that will be taken into account

The right to know how the issue will be decided

The right to respond to the allegations

Where the possible sanction is of a serious nature, the right to be heard by the decision-making body

Where the possible sanction is of a serious nature, the right to ask questions of the other party or witnesses where there is a dispute about the facts

The right to impartiality

The right to the absence of bias in the decision-maker

The right to impartiality in the investigation and decision-making

In implementing these procedures, the Principal and Board will ensure that no student is discriminated against on any of the following grounds:

- Gender
- Marital status
- Family status
- Sexual orientation
- Religion
- Age
- Disability
- Race
- Membership of the Travelling Community.

The Board of Management and the Principal will also ensure that the implementation of these procedures will take into account such factors as:

- The age and state of health of the student

- The student's previous record at the school
- Any particular circumstances unique to the student which might sensibly be taken into account in connection with the behaviour e.g. strained or traumatic domestic situations
- The extent to which parental, peer or other pressure may have contributed to the behaviour
- The degree of severity of the behaviour, the frequency of its occurrence, the extent of its premeditation and the likelihood of its recurring
- Whether or not the behaviour impaired or will impair the normal functioning of the student or other students in the school
- Whether or not the behaviour occurred on school premises or when the student was otherwise in the charge of the school staff or when the student was on the way to or from school. An important consideration in cases of doubt is the extent to which behaviour away from the school had a serious impact on the life of the school
- The degree to which behaviour was a violation of one or more expectations contained in the school's Code of Behaviour and the relative importance of the expectation(s)
- Whether the incident was perpetrated by the student on his or her own or as a part of a group.

Procedures for Suspension

The Principal makes the decision (or, in the absence, the acting or Deputy Principal) on the basis of the reasons set out in the Code of Behaviour and the examples aforementioned. The student must be informed of the grounds which gave rise to a possible suspension, and be given an opportunity to respond, before a decision to suspend is reached and formalised. The Parents of the suspended student are informed by phone and/or post and invited to come to the school for a meeting. If suspension is to be immediate (e.g. in the interests of health and safety) every effort will be made to contact by phone the Parents/Guardians. This contact will be followed up with a letter. The student will be supervised or remain in class until suspension takes effect. A student will never be sent home during school day, unless collected by Parent /Guardian (or other suitable arrangement made).

The formal letter of notification may include:

Notice of the suspension

Effective dates and duration of the suspension

Reasons for the suspension

Expectations of the student while on suspension if required a study programme may be attached.

Importance of parental assistance in resolving the matter

A statement that the student is under the care and responsibility of the parents/guardians while on suspension

A statement that the Education Welfare Board has been informed (If the suspension is longer than 5 days, or the student has been suspended for more than 20 days during the school year to date)

Information on Appeal rights (internal school appeal / Section 29 Appeal)

Requirements, which need to be in place when student returns (e.g. written apology, completed assignments etc.)

Procedures for the formal re-introduction of the student into the school may include the following:

Parents may be requested to attend with the student on the day of his/her return to the school

Undertakings of good behaviour may be requested in writing

Agreed conditions (e.g. Counselling, referral to NEPS, other pastoral supports) should be signed by parent and pupil where appropriate.

Grounds for Removing a Suspension

Section 23 (2) d of the Education Welfare Act 2000 requires the school to publish the grounds for removing a suspension. This implies that a system is in place for review / appeal of a suspension. Grounds may include:

- Successful appeal to the Board of Management
- Successful appeal under Section 29 of the Education Act
- New circumstances come to light
- Following discussion with parents/guardians

Appeals

LWETB offers an opportunity to parents/guardians and students over 18 years of age to appeal the Principal's decision to suspend. All appeals will be made in writing to the Board of Management within seven days of notification of suspension. All appeals will be heard as soon as is practically possible. A section 29 Appeal may be taken in the case where a student cumulative number of suspensions in one academic year exceeds 20 days. For practical reasons having a formal appeal to the Board of Management on short suspensions imposed may be inappropriate, very time-consuming and render the suspension meaningless. It is possible the suspension may already be served before the appeal is actually heard. If the appeal is successful, the suspension will be removed from the student's file/record.

Review of the use of Suspension

The Board of Management will review the use of suspension at regular intervals to ensure that it is consistent with school policy. The Board of Management will also examine patterns of use to identify circumstances that might be influencing behaviour/s in the school and to ensure that the utilisation of suspension continues to be appropriate and effective. In all circumstances, as authorised by the Board of Management, the Principal is solely responsible for the day-to-day safe environment of the school and the discipline of its students. In her/his absence, this responsibility is delegated to the Deputy Principal and, in the occurrence of both their absences, to members of the Assistant Principals Team who will be assigned the responsibility of “ActingUp” in the event of this occurrence.

Exclusion

If, in the judgment of the Principal, a student should be excluded, the Principal shall refer the matter to the Board of Management for decision.

Exclusion of a student is a very serious step, and one that will only be taken by the Board of Management in extreme cases of unacceptable behaviour. The school will normally have taken significant steps to address earlier incidences of misbehaviour and to avoid expulsion of a student including, as appropriate:

- Meeting with parents and the student to try to find ways of helping the student to change their behaviour
- Making sure that the student understands the possible consequences of their behaviour if it should persist
- Ensuring that all other possible options have been tried
- Seeking the assistance of support agencies.

In very rare circumstances, it is envisaged that exclusion may be sought by the Principal based on a single occurrence of serious misbehaviour, which will invoke an “Automatic Exclusion”. These include:

- Physical attack
- Sexual attack
- Serious threat of violence to a member of the school community
- Supply of illegal drugs to other students of the school community
- An extremely vexatious allegation against a member of the school community
- The student’s behaviour is a persistent cause of significant disruption to the learning of others or to the teaching process
- The student is uncontrollable and not amenable to any form of school authority

- The student is responsible for serious damage to property
- Harassment

Any allegation of serious misbehaviour/s, deemed by the Principal to be of a criminal nature, will always be referred to the Gardai.

Procedures for Exclusion

Schools are required by law to follow fair procedures as well as procedures prescribed under the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, when proposing to exclude a student. Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant exclusion, the procedural steps will include:

1. A detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the Principal.
2. A recommendation to the Board of Management by the Principal.
3. Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's recommendation; and the holding of a hearing.
4. Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing.
5. Consultations arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer.
6. Confirmation of the decision to exclude.

It is a matter for each Board of Management to decide which of the tasks involved in these procedural steps requires separate meetings and which tasks can be accomplished together in a single meeting, consistent with giving parents due notice of meetings and a fair and reasonable time to prepare for a Board hearing.

Step 1: A detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the Principal

- The Principal should inform the student and parents/guardians about the details of the alleged misbehaviour, how it will be investigated and that it could result in exclusion.
- Parents/guardians and the student will be given every opportunity to respond to the complaint of serious misbehaviour before a decision is made and before a sanction is imposed.
- Parents/guardians will be given due notice of meetings in writing and a fair and reasonable time to prepare for meetings.
- If a student and his/her parents/guardians fail to attend a meeting they should be informed in writing of the gravity of the matter and the importance of attending a re-scheduled meeting and, failing that, the duty of the school authorities to make a decision to respond to the student's alleged behaviour.

Step 2: A recommendation to the Board of Management by the Principal

Where the Principal forms a view, based on the investigation of the alleged misbehaviour, that exclusion may be warranted, the Principal makes a recommendation to the Board of Management to consider exclusion. The Principal should:

- inform the parents/guardians and the student that the Board of Management is being asked to consider exclusion
- ensure that parents/guardians have records of: the allegations against the student; the investigation; and written notice of the grounds on which the Board of Management is being asked to consider exclusion
- provide the Board of Management with the same comprehensive records as are given to parents/guardians.
- notify the parents/guardians of the date of the hearing by the Board of Management and invite them to that hearing
- advise the parents/guardians that they can make a written and oral submission to the Board of Management
- ensure that parents/guardians have enough notice to allow them to prepare for the hearing.

Step 3: Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's recommendation and the holding of a hearing

It is the responsibility of the Board of Management to review the initial investigation and satisfy itself that the preliminary investigation was properly conducted in line with fair procedures. The Board should undertake its own reviews of all documentation and the circumstances of the case. It should ensure that no party who has had any involvement with the circumstances of the case is part of the Board's deliberations (for example, a member of the Board who may have made an allegation about the student). Where the Board decides to consider excluding a student, it must hold a hearing. The meeting for the purpose of the hearing should be properly conducted in accordance with Board procedures. At the hearing, the Principal and the parents/guardians, or a student aged eighteen years or over, put their case to the Board in each other's presence. Each party should be allowed to make enquiries of the other party directly. The meeting may also be an opportunity for parents to make their case for lessening the sanction. In the conduct of the hearing, the Board must take care to ensure that the members are, and are seen to be, impartial as between the Principal and the student. Parents/guardians may wish to be accompanied at hearings and the Board should facilitate this, in line with good practice and Board procedures. After both sides have been heard, the Board should ensure that the Principal and parents/guardians or student, if over 18 years of age, are not present for the Board's deliberations.

Step 4: Board of Management deliberations and actions following the hearing

Having heard from all the parties, it is the responsibility of the Board to decide whether or not the allegation is substantiated and, if so, whether or not exclusion is the appropriate sanction. Where the Board, having considered all the facts of the case, is of the opinion that the student should be expelled, the Board must notify the Educational Welfare Officer in writing of its opinion, and the reasons for this opinion. (Education (Welfare) Act 2000, s24 (1)). The Board should refer to National Educational Welfare Board reporting procedures for proposed expulsions. The student cannot be excluded before the passage of twenty school days from the

date on which the EWO receives this written notification (Education (Welfare) Act 2000, s24 (1)). The Board of Management should inform the parents/guardians in writing about its conclusions and the next steps in the process. Where exclusion is proposed, the parents/guardians should be told that the Board of Management will now inform the Educational Welfare Officer.

Step 5: Consultations arranged by the Educational Welfare Officer

Within twenty days of receipt of a notification from the Board of Management of its opinion that a student should be expelled, the Educational Welfare Officer must:

- make all reasonable efforts to hold individual consultations with the Principal, the parents/guardians and the student and anyone else who may be of assistance
- convene a meeting of those parties who agree to attend (Education (Welfare) Act 2000, section 24).

The purpose of the consultations and the meeting is to ensure that arrangements are made for the student to continue in education. These consultations may result in an agreement about an alternative intervention that would avoid expulsion. However, where the possibility of continuing in the school is not an option, at least in the short term, the consultation should focus on alternative educational possibilities. In the interests of the educational welfare of the student, those concerned should come together with the Educational Welfare Officer to plan for the student's future education. Pending these consultations about the student's continued education, the Board of Management may take steps to ensure that good order is maintained and that the safety of students is secured (Education (Welfare) Act 2000, s24(5)). The Board of Management may consider it appropriate to suspend a student during this time. Suspension should only be considered where there is a likelihood that the continued presence of the student during this time will seriously disrupt the learning of others or represent a threat to the safety of other students or staff.

Step 6: Confirmation of the decision to exclude

Where the twenty-day period following notification to the Educational Welfare Officer has elapsed, and where the Board of Management remains of the view that the student should be expelled, the Board should formally confirm the decision to exclude (this task might be delegated to the Chairperson of the Board of Management and the Principal). Parents/guardians should be notified immediately that the exclusion will now proceed. Parents/guardians and the student should be told about the right to appeal and supplied with the standard form on which to lodge an appeal. A formal record should be made of the decision to exclude the student.

Appeals

A parent, or a student aged over eighteen years, may appeal a decision to expel to Longford/Westmeath Education and Training Board. Where an appeal to the ETB has been concluded, parents/guardians, or a student aged over eighteen years, may subsequently go on to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills under the provisions of the Education Act 1998, section 29.

Review of the use of Exclusion

The Board of Management of Castlepollard Community College will review the use of exclusion in the school at regular intervals to ensure that its use is consistent with school policies, that patterns of use are examined to identify factors that may be influencing behaviour in the school, and to ensure that exclusion is used appropriately.

The Health, Safety and Welfare of each member of the school community underpins the Code of Behaviour.

The Code of Behaviour will be reviewed regularly. Ongoing reviews and evaluation take cognisance of changing information, changing society, legislation, ministerial/government instructions, developments in the school-based programmes and feedback from students, staff, parents/guardians, and the Board of Management/ETB.

Covid 19

Cloth face coverings act as a barrier to help prevent respiratory droplets from travelling into the air and onto other people when the person wearing the face covering coughs, sneezes, talks or raises their voice. Cloth face coverings are therefore intended to prevent transmission of the virus from the wearer (who may not know that they are infected) to those with whom they come into close contact.

It is therefore a requirement that teachers, staff and students attending post primary schools wear a face covering when a physical distance of 2m from other staff or students cannot be maintained.

A medical certificate to certify that a person falls into a category listed below must be provided to the school by, or on behalf of, any person (staff or student) who claims that they are covered by the exemptions below:

- any person with difficulty breathing who cannot wear a cloth face covering or a visor
- any person who is unable to remove the cloth face-covering or visor without assistance
- any person who has special needs and who may feel upset or very uncomfortable wearing the cloth face covering or visor, for example persons with intellectual or developmental disabilities, mental health conditions, sensory concerns or tactile sensitivity.

In circumstances where a medical certificate is not provided that person (staff or student) will be refused entry to the school.

As part of the schools Covid-19 response plan for the safe and sustainable reopening of the school, each student must have a completed "return to educational facility declaration form" 3 days prior to their return to the school building after an absence. Access to the school will not be granted without the submission of the required declaration form.

